

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 PARIS 002333

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EUR/PGI (BUCKNEBERG) AND S/CT

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/06/2014

TAGS: [PTER](#) [PREL](#) [FR](#)

SUBJECT: GWOT ASSESSMENT: EMBASSY PARIS FEEDBACK

REF: A. STATE 60796

[1](#)B. 04 PARIS 8983

[1](#)C. PARIS 280

Classified By: DEPUTY CHIEF OF MISSION ALEX WOLFF, FOR REASONS 1.4 B/D

[1](#)1. (S) Summary: U.S.-French cooperation on terrorism is mature and broad-based. For a number of reasons, including the memory of terrorist attacks in Paris during the 1980s, the French bring significant expertise, focus and determination to their C/T activities, and are valued partners for a wide range of USG agencies. C/T cooperation with the USG is largely insulated from the day-to-day political and diplomatic tussles that can make the French often difficult allies. Notwithstanding this solid foundation, Post has outlined three areas where we believe our C/T objectives can be better served, and proposes suggestions to implement these objectives. End summary.

A MATURE, SUCCESSFUL RELATIONSHIP

[1](#)2. (S/NF) Embassy Paris comprises one of the widest range of USG agency representation anywhere in the world. Many of these agencies play a role in the remarkably broad U.S.-France security and counter-terrorism relationship. In addition to State's Consular, Diplomatic Security, Economic, Political, and Public Diplomacy sections that each handle pieces of the terrorism portfolio, other non-State sections in Paris that deal with the French on terrorism issues include the DEA, the Defense Attache, a DOJ liaison prosecutor, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) located in Paris and in the port cities of Le Havre and Marseilles, Legatt/FBI, NCIS, OSI, ROAL, a Transportation Security Administration (TSA) representative, and the Secret Service. A significant portion of the work of the Embassy's EST office is now counterterrorism-related. Other non-traditional security-oriented offices also contribute to counterterrorism work. For example, the Foreign Agricultural Service Office liaises with French agriculture authorities on biosafety risks. In addition, USG personnel are assigned to Interpol headquarters in Lyon, France's second largest city.

[1](#)3. (S) Two reasons for this breadth of USG representation are 1) France's own outsized role internationally and within the EU on counter-terrorism issues; and 2) a long-term institutional desire by the GOF to maintain close relations with USG C/T professionals. In addition to this permanent USG presence, delegations from the United States often visit France to discuss specialized aspects of C/T. Two noteworthy recent examples were a DOE/NRC/NSC/STATE visit in January on the protection of nuclear facilities and radiological materials. The visit has led to the development of the a multi-year program to share best practices, swap observers at nuclear security exercises, and collaborate scientifically to improve passive security measures for nuclear facilities. Also, in December 2004, then-Secretary of Health and Human Services Tommy Thompson led an HHS/STATE delegation to a G-8 meeting hosted in France to engage at a deeper level on the threat of bioterrorism. The ongoing work of the Bioterrorism Experts Group includes such items as best practices in protection of the food supply; information sharing on zoonotic diseases; licensing issues on medical countermeasures; sharing of information regarding vaccine availability; and the sharing of national response plans. France hosted two bioterrorism conferences in April in Lyon: the first Interpol conference devoted to this subject and a WHO-sponsored meeting on Biosafety and Biorisks. France participates actively in these fora and sends experts to U.S.-hosted biosafety/biorisk seminars in the U.S.

[1](#)4. (S) Internationally, France is a long-standing contributor of military troops and assistance in Afghanistan and a French admiral is regularly in the rotation to command Task Force 150, a multinational naval force that patrols the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf to interdict the movement of suspected terrorists from Afghanistan to the Arabian Peninsula. French Special Forces also operate closely with coalition forces in Afghanistan. It is a key member of the UN's Counter-Terrorism Committee and the G-8's Counter-Terrorism Action Group, and it has supported (and co-sponsored, where possible) terrorist designations to the UN's 1267 sanctions committee. Bilaterally, France recently signed two updated

agreements on extradition and counter-terrorism cooperation, and cooperates closely on Container Security Initiative (CSI) and airline security issues. Domestically, France continues to hold in pretrial detention 6 of the 7 ex-GTMO French citizen detainees (the seventh was declared not an enemy combatant by the Department of Defense). All six will be charged with "terrorist conspiracy," which has a maximum sentence of ten years. Most recently, terrorism investigating judges and prosecutors successfully argued for the conviction of Djamel Beghal and five accomplices arrested in 2001 on suspicion of planning to bomb the U.S. Embassy in Paris. Beghal and his five accomplices were convicted on March 15 and all received jail sentences. Other significant C/T operations include the dismantling of a local cell of "French jihadists to Iraq," a raid on and continuing investigation of the MEK presence in France, the dismantling of a GICM cell, and the near-destruction of ETA support cells in the south of France. Additional examples are reviewed in ref B.

AREAS TO IMPROVE

15. (S) As noted in ref C, France often appears to react differently to terrorism and radical Islam depending on its distance from it. Within its borders, the GOF reacts proactively, with speed and firmness. Elsewhere in the world, it is much more equivocal. Political and diplomatic considerations carry substantial weight, and sometimes trump security considerations. A good example of this is continued French intransigence within the EU on Hezbollah. It sees the EU's listing of Hezbollah as a bad idea for Lebanon's political stability and therefore, it continues to hold a firm line against listing, despite a growing openness within internal security circles to acknowledge that Hezbollah has committed terrorist acts and should be considered a terrorist organization. An approach that combines convincing the GOF of a case's merits and, where necessary, isolating France diplomatically offers the best chance of success, although in this particular situation, it will prove difficult to overcome the firm conviction of President Chirac and others that designating Hezbollah is a bad idea. Nevertheless, France's intelligence and security services must be persuaded by the existing evidence that Hezbollah is a terrorist organization. Presenting the GOF with evidence of Hezbollah involvement in terrorism in the West Bank and Gaza is particularly important, as the GOF cannot overlook Hezbollah's efforts to destroy the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. Having the Palestinian leadership weigh in with the French at a high level would be important as well; up to now, the French have maintained that only the U.S. and Israel are pressing them on Hezbollah, while the Palestinians remain in the background on the issue. Second, France must be isolated within the EU Clearinghouse. A number of EU countries hide behind France's strong opposition, but if they are peeled away, France may be more amenable. In general, France does not like to be seen publicly as blocking consensus, a fact that worked to our advantage in finally convincing the EU to designate Hamas.

16. (S) The Embassy believes that a gap in French C/T planning is its development of mass-casualty emergency response. The GOF understands they have improvements to make and have begun to conduct exercises to build and test their emergency response capabilities. However, France could benefit from observing the USG crisis simulation exercises. Post would recommend, therefore, for the invitation (where possible) for a GOF official to observe USG exercises and simulations. One good recent example is the inclusion of two high-level French officials as observers to the TOPOFF 3 simulation in the U.S. Expanding on this worthy initiative, Washington might consider inviting French officials as observers to other, similar simulations in the U.S. and abroad, to include USG training programs with other countries (such as those referenced in Jakarta 4212). The French can be prickly if given the impression that they need to be "trained" and in addition, giving them decision-making roles is often best avoided. One way to overcome these issues is to focus on "professional exchanges" and invite them to observe USG-organized emergency response simulations and allow them to translate best practices to the French system. In addition, Post will work to procure invitations for the USG to observe French-led crisis simulations.

17. (S) As mentioned in para 1, U.S.-French C/T cooperation is largely removed from daily political and diplomatic pressures. One reason for this is that GOF counter-terrorism is itself separated from the rest of the government. France's intelligence-related agencies and coordinating bodies - of which the DST, the RG, the DGSE and the SGDN are primary examples - all deal with terrorism (although the DST has a primary role domestically), but their investigations and cases are guarded carefully and rarely shared with the rest of the GOF. Similarly, the renowned terrorism investigating judges - led by Judge Jean-Louis Bruguiere -

operate in a different world than that of the rest of the judiciary. In short, the GOF counter-terrorism community is highly professional, but insular and centralized in Paris. Because of this, judiciary and police services not directly involved in counter-terrorism (but who may play an indirect support role) have a largely insufficient understanding of USG counter-terrorism policy and the judicial/investigative procedures that frame this policy. To replace working-level and upper management, France's counter-terrorism community draws upon the available pool of judicial and security professionals, many of whom have little understanding of the U.S., its judicial/law enforcement system, and its law enforcement organizational structure and resource allocations. We need to reach these judicial and security professionals as they begin their careers, and not only when they enter the counter-terrorism community, sometimes with already-formed prejudices. To this end, Post proposes approaching the National Magistrate School, other professional academies, and programs for already serving law enforcement officials with offers to deliver lectures on U.S. approaches to terrorism and law enforcement. We would request assistance from Washington in developing these proposals. Although in this case, results would probably not be immediate, in the long run, the USG would have much to gain by exposing French judicial and security professionals to the U.S. counter-terrorism and law enforcement system at an early stage in their careers.

LEACH